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SPEECH

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HON. A. G. BROWN, OF MISSISSIPPI,

OR

THE SLAVERY QUESTION;

27-5

DELIVERED

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES, DECEMBER 22, 1856 .



WASHINGTON:

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S P E E C H .

The Senate having under consideration the motion of Mr. Rusk to refer so much of the President's message as relates to foreign affairs to the Committee on Foreign Relations—

Mr. BROWN said: Mr. President, when the President's message came into the Senate, and was read by the Secretary, the first proceeding that followed was the rising of the senator from New Hampshire [Mr. HALE] to make a violent attack on the President and on the sentiments of his message. He based that attack chiefly on the ground that the President had intimated a purpose in certain quarters to attack slavery in the States. This speech of the senator from New Hampshire was quickly followed by speeches of a similar character from the senator from New York, [Mr. SEWARD,] and others on that side of the Chamber who sympathize with them. These assaults have fallen here as they will fall elsewhere—harmless shafts. They have inflicted no injury on the President, and they will inflict none on the great cause which he so manfully defended.

While assailing the President in coarse and unseemly phrase, these gentlemen have not failed to cover their own positions. In all they have said, from the hour that the message was read to this, the most casual observer will not have failed to perceive that, on some account, their tactics have been changed. The bold and defiant air of the conquering hero has given place to the subdued manner of defeated soldiers. Senators now read us long speeches, indignantly denying what I had supposed, up to within the last few days, was an admitted proposition everywhere, to wit: that when the proper time came, slavery was to be assaulted in the States. There seems, however, to have been a falling back from this position; why, I certainly do not know, but I have a strong suspicion that gentlemen have found themselves, even at the north, in advance of public sentiment, and it has been found prudent at least to fall back on more tenable ground.

While we have witnessed this exhibition in the Senate, elsewhere an exhibition not less remarkable has been going on. Politicians who certainly express no open sympathy with these gentlemen, seem to have been advancing from a position which they occupied heretofore, and taking one in closer proximity to the gentlemen on the other side of the Chamber. My reading of these counter-movements, the falling back of the one party and the advancing of the other, is this: that they mean for the time being to camp in sight of each other, and during the next four years to make forays on joint account against the National Democracy; and when the Presidential contest of 1860

comes on, they will go into battle under the same leader, and fight under banners so nearly alike that a soldier belonging under one being found fighting under the other, will subject himself to no charge of desertion.

I was not prepared at first for the indignant denials which we have heard from the other side of the Chamber, that there was a purpose to assail slavery in the States. I was not, because at first I did not understand this change of tactics; I had supposed that gentlemen were more than half inclined to have it known that such an attack was in contemplation, and that at the proper time their purposes would be made manifest. I knew very well it had been quite the custom at all times when these purposes were directly charged on gentlemen, for them to throw them aside with a sort of "Oh no—we don't—no such thing." But the burning indignation which has been lately manifested has struck me with surprise. My surprise was manifested in the beginning of this debate. I ventured to quote from memory certain passages from the speeches of gentlemen, manifesting as I then thought, and still think, purposes altogether different from those avowed in this debate. I spoke from memory alone; but since then I have given more critical attention to the recorded speeches of gentlemen, and can now speak with more accuracy, and with greater confidence. I do not mean to say that senators deliberately disavow their real sentiments—that would violate the decorum of this body. But I will say that if they have never contemplated an attack on slavery in the States, they have been singularly unfortunate in the use of language. I intend to-day to call particular attention to certain expressions heretofore used by them in the discussion of this question.

But before I do so, let me set not only myself right, but let me set those right for whom I speak. I recur very briefly to a speech delivered by myself on the 30th of January, 1850, and shall read two or three short sentences from that speech. The party with whom I acted at that day, like the party with whom I act now, had been accused of a direct and deliberate purpose to bring about such a state of public affairs as must necessarily result in a dissolution of the Union. Denying that charge, speaking for myself, speaking for those who acted with me, speaking, as I then believed, and as I now believe, for the great mass of the southern people, I used this language:

"I repeat, we deprecate disunion. Devoted to the Constitution—reverencing the Union—holding in sacred remembrance the names, the deeds, and the glories of our common and illustrious ancestry—there is no ordinary ill to which we would not bow sooner than dissolve the political association of these States. If there was any point short of absolute ruin to ourselves and desolation to our country, at which these aggressive measures would certainly stop, we would say at once, go to that point and give us peace."

So I say to-day, sir. Speaking for myself and for those in whose name I am authorized to speak, I declare before the Senate and the world, that this Union has nowhere more devoted friends than they and I. And when I have spoken for those for whom I am authorized by election to speak, I feel that I may safely go further and say that nineteen-twentieths of the whole people of the southern States agree with us. Point out any spot short of absolute ruin to ourselves, and desolation to our section of the country, and give us the guarantee that when you have gone to that point, these aggressive and perplex-

ing measures, legislative and others, shall certainly cease, and we will say to you at once, go to that point. But, sir, I went on that occasion, as I do now, a step further; I said:

“Does any man desire to know at what time, and for what cause, I would dissolve the Union? I will tell him. At the first moment after you consummate your first act of aggression upon slave property, I would declare the Union dissolved; and for this reason: such an act, perpetrated after the warning we have given you, would evince a settled purpose to interpose your authority in the management of our domestic affairs, thus degrading us from our rightful position as equals to a state of dependence and subordination. Do not mistake me; I do not say that such an act would, *per-se*, justify disunion; I do not say that our exclusion from the Territories would alone justify it; I do not say that the destruction of the slave trade in the District of Columbia, nor even its abolition here, nor yet the prohibition of the slave trade among the States, would justify it. It may be that not one, nor two, nor all of these combined, would justify disunion. These are but the initiative steps—they lead you on to the mastery over us, and you shall not take these steps.”

I meant then, Mr. President, to say what I say now, that no man in the south has ever taken the ground that the mere act of our exclusion from the Territories would dissolve the Union, if that could be the end of agitation. No southern man has ever taken the ground, and no one takes it now, that the abolition of slavery in this District might not be submitted to, if that was to be the end. But we have looked, and are looking for the day, and have a right, in consequence of the declarations constantly emanating from high quarters, to anticipate the hour when the whole northern free-soil phalanx will be turned loose in one mighty assault upon slavery in the States. I have taught my people, as I would teach them to-day, to prepare for this assault. Defend the outposts. Yield not an inch of ground. It is better to die defending the door-sill than admit the enemy and then see the hearth-stone bathed in blood.

On the occasion to which I have referred, I drew a picture of what must be our condition if these schemes of emancipation should ever be carried out. Then, as now, gentlemen denied that there was any intention to interfere with slavery in the States; then, as now, we had assurances of fraternal feelings on the part of our northern brothers. I replied then as I do now:

“You tell us, sir, there is no intention of pushing us to extremities like these. I do not doubt the sincerity of gentlemen who make this avowal. If there was fixedness in their positions, I would believe them—I would trust them. If members of Congress were to the political, what stars are to the planetary system, I would take their solemn, and, I hope, sincere declarations, and be satisfied. I should feel secure. But a few days, a brief space, and you will pass away, and your places will be filled by men more hostile than you, as you are more hostile than your predecessors, and the next who come after your successors will be more hostile than they.”

I then thought, as we all know now, that the abolition sentiment at the north was fearfully on the increase; that, bursting the fetters that bound it to a handful of despised fanatics, it was invading all ranks of society, and taking captive thousands and hundreds of thousands who a few years ago spurned it as a viper and shunned it as they would a pestilence. What have we not seen and heard? Within the last few days we have heard sentiments avowed on this floor which, a few years ago, would have found no sponsor anywhere outside of an abolition convention. Now they are responded to by a large minority here, and by a much larger minority, if not indeed a majority, in the other house of Congress. We cannot close our eyes to the light that is before us. We have seen this party rise from a little, despised band,

and grow stronger and stronger, until it marches in triumph through twelve northern States, and is defeated in the remaining four by a vote so close as to make our victory over it almost a defeat. Was I not right, then, in refusing to take the promises of these men? Where are the men of that day? Gone, sir, gone. Go to the other house, and you will find their places filled by the men whose coming I predicted five years ago.

Mr. President, it is not my purpose to charge senators with falsehood, and certainly I shall not assume the privilege of counselling those opposed to me; but there can be no harm in my saying to the free-soil portion of the Senate, your supporters at home do not believe you are sincere in declaring your opposition to any interference with slavery in the States. They know that, without such interference, there will never be one bondman less; and whenever you convince them that you are sincere, they will turn you out, and send others here more hostile to slavery than you, as you are more hostile than those who went before you. And, to tell the truth, I think they will serve you right in turning you out. If you did not mean to attack slavery in the States, you ought not to have taught others to believe you did; and this you did, as I shall now proceed to show.

I take the first in age among you, as he is certainly first in talent and position, the senator from New York, [Mr. SEWARD.] When the other day I had occasion to quote by memory from a very remarkable speech of that senator, he did not deny the accuracy of my quotation, but, as senators will recollect, he referred me to Redfield's edition of his speeches, and avowed his willingness to abide by anything found in those volumes. I called at the library, and failed to obtain the books. Communicating that fact to the senator, I do him the justice in this public manner to say that he was so kind as to present me with a copy of his speeches, a volume of which I now hold in my hand. Unlike my friend from Tennessee, [Mr. JONES,] I mean to take these volumes home. I mean to show my constituents, from an authorized edition of the senator's speeches, how much of venom against them and their institutions he has managed to compress within the narrow limits of a little volume like this, and if the Senate will indulge me, I will give a specimen now, not only for the edification of the Senate, but for the information of all independent outsiders. In a speech delivered by the senator from New York, at Cleveland, in 1848, he used this language, (I read from the third volume of Redfield's edition of the speeches of WILLIAM H. SEWARD:)

“ ‘What, then!’ you say, ‘can nothing be done for freedom; because the public conscience is inert? Yes, much can be done—everything can be done. Slavery can be limited to its present bounds; it can be ameliorated; *it can be, and must be, abolished; and you and I can and must do it.* The task is as simple and easy as its consummation will be beneficent and its rewards glorious.’ ”

Sir, I asked the senator the other day, speaking from memory, as I ask him now, speaking from an authorized edition of his speeches, what did he mean by that language? When addressing himself to a northern audience, he said “slavery can and must be abolished, and you and I can and must do it!” What did he mean, if he did not contemplate an attack upon slavery in the States? Was it to be done by the concurrence of the southern States, as the senator would now

persuade us he means to have it done if it shall be done at all? If so, why did not the senator so declare at the time? Why, addressing an audience hostile to slavery, and whom he was persuading to become still more hostile, did he say "slavery can and must be abolished, and you and I can and must do it?" Did the senator anticipate the concurrence of the south? Then, why no allusion to the south? Did he anticipate that the south was to do the work unaided by the north? Then why appeal to the north? But I go on with his speech:

"Wherein do the strength and security of slavery lie? You answer that they lie in the Constitution of the United States, and the Constitution and laws of all slaveholding States. Not at all. They lie in the erroneous sentiment of the American people. CONSTITUTIONS AND LAWS CAN NO MORE RISE ABOVE THE VIRTUE OF THE PEOPLE than the limpid stream can climb above its native spring. Inculcate, then, the love of FREEDOM and the equal rights of man under the *paternal roof*; see to it that they are taught in the *schools* and in the *churches*; reform your own code; EXTEND A CORDIAL WELCOME TO THE FUGITIVE WHO LAYS HIS WEARY LIMBS AT YOUR DOOR, and defend him as you would your *paternal gods*; correct your own error, that slavery has any constitutional guarantee which may not be released, and ought not to be relinquished."

Here we have it, sir. The senator from New York meditates no attack on slavery in the States. Oh, no—not he! He only desires the northern people to understand how much they are at liberty to hate slavery. Their indignation need not be restrained by any vulgar fancy that slavery is protected by the Constitution or the laws, either State or national. Their virtue can rise above the Constitution and the laws. The way is pointed out: inculcate the love of *freedom*—that is, hostility to slavery—under the paternal roof. Yes, teach your children to lisp with their earliest breath anathemas against the south. Teach it in the schools. Let the schoolmaster understand that he has a higher duty to perform than merely to educate his pupils. He may teach them to read and write, instruct them in geography, and point them to the great moral laws that govern the universe, and yet there is a higher duty for him to perform; he must teach them to hate slavery, so that when they are grown up men and women, the Constitution and laws shall not rise above their virtue. The servant of God, as he ascends the sacred desk, is told by the senator from New York to preach, not Christ and Him crucified, but freedom—freedom to all mankind, and freedom especially to the poor down-trodden slave. And yet the senator has no purpose now, or at any time to come, to attack slavery in the States. Then why this teaching? Why teach children under the paternal roof to hate slavery? Why teach it in the schools and in the churches? Why reverse the Scriptural admonition to love your neighbors as yourselves, and thus teach all mankind to hate the south and despise its people? If there is no purpose to interfere with the south, its people, or its institutions, to what end does the senator direct all this advice?

Mr. President, the senator gives us the key to his motive. He says, on page 302 of the volume in my hand, "Whenever"—yes, sir, mark it well—"whenever the public mind shall will the abolition of slavery, the way will open for it." There it is, sir—whenever the public mind shall will the abolition of slavery; and then he says, in plain Saxon: "Prepare the public mind under the paternal roof—prepare it in the schools and in the churches—when it is ready the way will open for it." But the senator has no purpose to interfere with slavery in the

States—good, easy man!—he only wants to prove that the Constitution and laws cannot rise above the virtue of the people. Mr. President, I give the senator credit for all the talents he possesses, but he has no right to assume that all the rest of mankind are fools.

“Say to slavery,” says the senator, “when it shows its bond and demands the pound of flesh, that if it draws one drop of blood its life shall pay the forfeit.” What does that mean? What is the bond here alluded to but the federal Constitution? When the master comes with that Constitution in one hand, and the laws enacted in pursuance of it in the other, and demands the return of his fugitive slave, who perchance has taken shelter under the very roof of the senator from New York, that senator says, like Shylock’s judge, “Yes, I award you the return of the slave; but I impose conditions—such conditions as must forever render my judgment inoperative and void. You have a right, under the Constitution, to your slave; the law doth give it, and I award it; take your pound of flesh, but spill not one drop of blood; take your slave, but be cautious that you touch not even the hem of the garments of freedom; for if you do, your life shall pay the forfeit.” Such, sir, are the teachings of the senator; such his ethics; such that moral law of the people over which the Constitution can no more climb than the stream can rise above its native spring!

But again: “Extend a cordial welcome to the fugitive who lays his weary limbs at your door, and defend him as you would your paternal gods.” True, the Constitution declares that fugitives shall be delivered up; but I tell you, says the senator, that “slavery has no constitutional guarantee that may not be released.” Disobey the Constitution; give a cordial welcome to the fugitive; defend him as you would your paternal gods; strike down the master, and set the bondman free. The Constitution may sanction slavery—the Bible may tolerate it—God may have ordained it; but what of all that? We must have a higher law.

If it shall be shown that the Constitution sanctions slavery, we will demand an anti-slavery Constitution; if the Bible tolerates slavery, we will demand an anti-slavery Bible; let it be proven that God ordains slavery, and we will shriek for an anti-slavery God. Thus is the Constitution denounced, the Bible derided, and God insulted on his throne by men who impiously endeavor to prove what the Constitution, the Bible, and God himself deny—that a negro is the white man’s equal. But there is no intention to interfere with slavery in the States. We mean to abolish it; we mean to teach abolition in the schools and in the churches, and under the paternal roof; we must defend runaway negroes as we would our paternal gods; we must correct our error that the Constitution gives any protection to slavery which we may not release; and above all, we must teach the people that their virtue is not to be overcome by the Constitution; only let their minds be prepared for abolition, and the way will open. But we must not interfere with slavery in the States. Will the senator tell us what slavery it is he means to abolish, if it is not slavery in the States? Does he know of any slavery anywhere else but in the States?

We have had intimations that the enemies of domestic slavery expect their final triumph through the action of the southern States—that by a sort of “moral suasion” the owners of slaves will be induced finally to give them up. On this precise point I shall have something to say presently. Before I proceed to that point, however, let me make a passing allusion to the higher law doctrine of the senator from New York. From the first volume of Redfield’s authorized edition of the senator’s speeches I read the following :

“We hold no arbitrary authority over anything, whether acquired lawfully or seized by usurpation. The Constitution regulates our stewardship; the Constitution devotes the domain to union, to justice, to defence, to welfare, and to liberty. BUT THERE IS A HIGHER LAW THAN THE CONSTITUTION which regulates our authority over the domain.”

A higher law! The senator, by universal admission, has the honor, if it be an honor, of having first taught in the political schools of our country this doctrine of a higher law. I want to show how apt some of his scholars are. Some of the pupils of the distinguished senator from New York assembled in convention in the State of Ohio for the purpose of nominating a candidate for governor, and resolved as follows :

“Resolved, That we cannot respect, nor can we confide in, those ‘lower law’ doctors of divinity who hold human laws above the laws of God; nor can we concur in their teachings, that the Divine law is subject to congressional compromise.”

“Resolved, That we hereby give it to be distinctly understood by this nation and the world that, as abolitionists, considering that the strength of our cause lies in its righteousness, and our hopes for it in our conformity to the laws of God, and our support for the rights of man, we owe to the Sovereign Ruler of the Universe, as a proof of our allegiance to Him in all our civil relations and offices, whether as friends, citizens, or as public functionaries, sworn to support the Constitution of the United States, to regard and treat the third clause of the instrument, whenever applied in the case of A FUGITIVE SLAVE, AS UTTERLY NULL AND VOID, and consequently as forming no part of the Constitution of the United States, whenever we are called upon or sworn to support it.”

There is the result of the senator’s teachings. He uses the influence of his great name and his high position to declare, before the Senate and to the world, that there is a law higher than the Constitution. His pupils, taking up the doctrine, declare that, when they are sworn to support the Constitution, they are at liberty to treat as null and void that clause which requires the return of a fugitive slave. Whether the pupils understand precisely as the instructor intended to teach, it is not my business to determine. That is a duty which devolves on the senator himself. It is sufficient for me to know that he has taught them to believe there is a law higher than the Constitution, and that they, following his teachings, repudiate the Constitution, and spurn the obligations of the oath that binds them to support it. One set of his admiring friends march right home to victory by planting their feet on the neck of the Constitution, and another part cry out for an anti-slavery Constitution, anti-slavery Bible, and anti-slavery God.

But, sir, I have other speeches not contained in an authorized edition of the senator’s works, but I suppose from the title page not less entitled to credit. I read from a pamphlet, entitled “The Dangers of Extending Slavery, and the Contest and the Crisis; two speeches of William H. Seward, published by the Republican Association: the tenth English edition; Buell & Blanchard, printers, Washington,

D. C." The speeches must have been published in very small editions, or have received great favor in certain quarters. Now, I beg to call attention to a few passages from the speech delivered at Albany, October 12, 1855.

I do so for several reasons, and, among them, for this reason: I want to show how little was thought of the idea of moral suasion, of abolishing slavery through the consent of the masters, when this speech was made. This idea of moral suasion—of bringing up the owners of slaves to the great work of emancipation—was not thought of when this speech was delivered. The senator is too well acquainted with the springs of human action to suppose that he could ever induce slaveholders to adopt his ideas by language such as I shall now read:

"All agree that in every case, and throughout all hazards, aristocracy must be abhorred and avoided, and republican institutions must be defended and preserved.

"Think it not strange or extravagant when I say that an aristocracy has already arisen here, and that it is already undermining the republic. An aristocracy could not arise in any country where there was no *privileged class*, and no special foundation on which such a class could permanently stand. On the contrary, every State, however republican its constitution may be, is sure to become an aristocracy, sooner or later, if it has a *privileged class* standing firmly on an enduring special foundation; and if that class is continually growing stronger and stronger, and the unprivileged classes are continually growing weaker and weaker.

"A *privileged class* has existed in this country from an early period of its settlement. *Slaveholders constitute that class.* They have special foundation on which to stand—namely, *personal dominion over slaves.*"

Was it by language such as this that the senator hoped to bring the slaveholders to the point of joining in his great scheme of emancipation? Was there ever an attack more insidious, or one better calculated to bring the slaveholder into discredit? A little further on the senator exclaims: "Oh, how blessed a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" He comes to bury Cæsar, not to praise him. While he speaks of his brethren of the south, he teaches others to regard them as enemies. He says they are the enemies of liberty, already engaged in undermining the republic.

The senators's audience, on the occasion referred to, were told plainly that the slaveholders of the south constituted a *privileged class*—an aristocracy—and that an aristocracy was dangerous to the existence of the republic. Why did he thus teach, unless he meant to bring this *privileged class* into reproach? If there be in the south a *privileged class*—an aristocracy, in the language of the senator—and that aristocracy is dangerous to the existence of the republic, does the senator propose no remedy? Does he mean simply to complain of the existence of the evil, without attempting, in any capacity whatever, to remedy that evil? He goes on:

"The spirit of the revolutionary age was adverse to that *privileged class.* America and Europe were firmly engaged then in prosecuting what was expected to be a speedy, complete, and *universal abolition of African slavery.*"

Here, again, the *universal abolition of African slavery* is spoken of as an act necessary to place the government in harmony with the spirit of the revolutionary age. Still there was no design to interfere with slavery in the States. The great scheme of *universal abolition* was to be carried out through the influence of moral suasion, and that influence was to be effectually exerted by calling the slaveholders

a privileged class, an aristocracy whose special privileges were dangerous to the republic, and the liberties of the people.

“O shame! where is thy blush?”

See how the senator lays down one proposition after another, dovetailing each into its predecessor in a manner to draw the public mind to a particular conclusion, that conclusion being that by all the memories of their revolutionary sires, by all their hopes of preserving republicanism in this country, they are called upon to wage a ceaseless, unrelenting, and never-dying warfare on slavery wherever it exists; and yet the senator comes here to-day and says: “No; I indignantly repudiate the idea that either I or my friends ever dreamed of assailing slavery in the States.” After going on through a long argument, which I have no time to read, nor the Senate patience to hear, the senator says, I read again from the Albany speech:

“I will only ask, in concluding this humiliating rehearsal, whether there is not in this favored country a privileged class; whether it does not stand on an enduring foundation; whether it is not growing stronger and stronger, while the unprivileged class grows weaker and weaker; whether its further growth and extent would not be, not merely detrimental, but dangerous; and whether there is any hope to arrest that growth and extension hereafter, if the attempt shall not be made now?”

“The change that has become at last so necessary is as easy to be made as it is necessary. *The whole number of slaveholders is only three hundred and fifty thousand—one hundredth part of the entire population of the country. If you add their parents, children, immediate relatives, and dependents, they are two millions—one fifteenth part of the American people.*”

What, sir, is the object—the purpose of the senator in making these declarations? Why does he proclaim that this privileged class in the south is dangerous to republican institutions—that it exists there in violation of the great principle for which the revolutionary battles were fought, and that those who uphold it are only three hundred and fifty thousand? For what purpose, let me ask you, did the senator from New York present the case in this form to the mind of his audience at Albany? That senator never speaks without a purpose. He does not explain; and if he will not, I needs must be left to the resources of my own mind for an answer.

The senator knew that no chord in the heart of our people was so easily touched, or responded so promptly, as that one which binds it to the memories of the Revolution, and he rightly concluded that our people everywhere, north and south, were deeply imbued with republican sentiments. If, then, he could persuade them that there was a little handful of three hundred and fifty thousand slaveholders at the south warring against the great principles established in our Revolution, and breaking down republican institutions in the country, why, then, the twenty-five millions who do not belong to this privileged class—to this aristocracy—would rise up, and WILL the abolition of slavery; and then, in his own language, there being “*a WILL, the way would open for it.*”

It is not my business to explore the recesses of any man’s heart; but I apprehend the object of the senator in making the speech to which I have alluded, was to persuade the mighty north that it ought to *will* the abolition of slavery. He told them of its dangerous tendencies. He pointed to the feeble prop by which it is sustained. It is upheld, said he, by only three hundred and fifty thousand slaveholders; and you who are not slaveholders are more than twenty-five millions of

people ; only have the will to overthrow this great monstrosity, and the way will immediately open to you ! Such, if not the language, is at least the teaching of the senator from New York ; and yet he comes to the Senate to-day to tell us he never contemplated, never counselled, and never believed anybody else contemplated, or counselled, an attack on slavery in the States !

But, Mr. President, there is a deeper meaning—a larger significance to this speech of the senator. There are three hundred and fifty thousand slaveholding aristocrats in the south, says the senator—men at war with liberty, and dangerous to the republic. They are only one in one hundred of the entire population ; or if you add, he says, “ the children, relatives, and dependents, they are one in fifteen ; ” consequently fourteen parts out of every fifteen of the entire population have no interest in slavery. They are, as he seems to conclude, mere hewers of wood and drawers of water to the slaveholding aristocrats.

These suggestions come from no friendly spirit, Mr. President. They open a wide field for speculation ; and if I did not feel there was a necessity for my being brief, I would ask the senator to join me in a ramble through that field. To him it is not a field of treasures, as he supposes. If he expects, by appeals like these, to turn the hearts of the non-slaveholders of the south against slavery, he will miss his aim. They may have no pecuniary interest in slavery, but they have a social interest at stake that is worth more to them than all the wealth of all the Indies. Suppose the senator shall succeed in his ideas of universal abolition—what is to be the social condition of the races in the south ? Can they live together in peace ? No one pretends to think they can. Will the white man be allowed to maintain his superiority there ? Let us examine this proposition. There are in my State about three hundred and fifty thousand whites, and about an equal number of blacks. Suppose the negroes were all set free. What would be the immediate and necessary consequence ? A struggle for the supremacy would instantly ensue. White immigration to the State would cease of course. The whites already there would have but little motive to struggle in the maintenance of the unequal contest between the blacks and their millions of sympathizing friends in the free States. The consequence would be that the men of fortune would gather up their transferable property, and seek a home in some other country. The poor men—those of little means—the very men on whom the senator relies to aid him in carrying out his great scheme of emancipation, would alone be compelled to remain : their poverty, and not their will, would compel them to remain. In the course of a few years, with no one going to the State, and thousands on thousands leaving it in one constant stream, the present equilibrium between the races would be lost. In a few years, the disparity would probably be some three, four, or five to one in favor of the blacks. In this state of things, it is not difficult to see what would be the white man's condition. If he should be allowed to maintain his equality he might think himself fortunate ; superiority would be a thing not to be dreamed of. The negroes being vastly in the majority, would probably claim the ascendancy in the social, and in all other circles. If the white man, reduced

to such a condition, were allowed to marry his sons to negro wives, or his daughters to negro husbands, he might bless his stars. If the senator from New York expects the aid of non-slaveholders in the south in bringing about this state of social relations, let me tell him he is greatly mistaken. If I had to take my choice to-day between an army of large slaveholders and an army of non-slaveholders to defend the institutions of the south, I would take the latter. The first would fight to defend their property, the last to maintain their social superiority; the one would see an outlet after defeat, the other would see themselves degraded below the level of the negroes; their sons married to negro wives, and their daughters consigned to the embraces of negro husbands. I tell the senator that his philosophy has failed—his fine-spun theories will all explode, when submitted to the test of the plain, common sense of the non-slaveholding population of the southern States.

The senator from Massachusetts [Mr. WILSON] was equally particular with the senator from New York, to assure us that he contemplated no attack on slavery in the States. Indeed he became somewhat indignant at the idea that any one should intimate that he had ever contemplated any such thing. I have no authorized edition of the senator's speeches; and if I read him incorrectly, he is present, I am glad to see, and will no doubt correct me. The senator knows what the anti-slavery party mean to do—I mean the Garrison and Wendell Phillips party. Did the senator from Massachusetts use this language:

“The *anti-slavery* party alone is too weak. They are few in numbers, though their policy, I believe, will yet be impressed upon the country, *but the time is not yet.*”

The senator, I repeat, knows who the anti-slavery party are, and he knows their purposes. Did he use that language? If he did, the inference is irresistible that he believed in the soundness of the anti-slavery theories, and was ready to embrace them at the right time. If he did not so believe, and was not so ready, why did he declare, “but the time is not yet?”

Mr. WILSON. Will the senator allow me to make an explanation?

Mr. BROWN. Certainly.

Mr. WILSON. I beg leave to assure the senator from Mississippi that the object of my making that statement was not to refer to the Garrison abolitionists as the anti-slavery men, or the radical or Gerrit Smith abolitionists; but to speak of the anti-slavery men of the country whose sentiments were embodied in the Buffalo platform of 1848, and the Pittsburg platform of 1852. The doctrines of the free-soil party were the doctrines to which I referred. I said that those who agreed in those platforms were in a small minority. I believed the sentiments embodied in those platforms were correct, and would yet be impressed on the country. Nothing in those platforms contemplates any action by the Congress of the United States, or any interference whatever with slavery in the slaveholding States in the Union. I never entertained the thought that we had that power, and I never proposed to usurp or exercise it.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, the senator admits that he used the language, but avoids its force by saying, in effect, that it was ad-

dressed to parties other than those I have named. The language was addressed to some one who was in advance of the senator ; and whether it was Garrison or Gerrit Smith, or some one of less ultra views, makes but little difference. It is the language of entreaty, addressed to some one imploring him not to go so fast. He says your sentiments are all right, but the time has not come for impressing them on the country. I submit to the Senate how far any party must have gone when the senator from Massachusetts had to call on them to stop ; and I submit to the senator himself, whether he did not contemplate an advance movement when he said, "The time is not yet."

The senator will pardon me if I say these are significant declarations ; and when coupled with remarks such as those I have quoted from the speeches of his friend from New York, they become too potential to be passed by in silence.

Mr. SEWARD. Mr. President, I am interested very much in this argument of the honorable senator, and I think it is a very fair and senatorial mode of proceeding. I have not the least objection whatever to his analysis of the arguments and speeches which I have made. It is not my purpose to answer ; but I know the honorable senator is proceeding in a manner which indicates what I might expect from him, fairness. I beg leave to say now, rather than at some other time in the debate, that I appeal to him, in the revision of his remarks, not to overstate, as I think he has erroneously done, disclaimers and denials which he assumes I have made here in this debate. On referring to the few remarks which I addressed to the Senate, on the first day that this question arose, he will see the precise extent to which I did go ; and I would not have him present me to the people of the country as denying or disclaiming anything more than I have actually done, and I know he does not wish it. I hope the honorable senator will excuse me for interrupting him on this particular point, as I have no wish to interfere with his argument.

Mr. BROWN. Certainly ; I do not wish, at this particular point, to review what I have said in regard to the senator from New York, my present dealing being with the senator from Massachusetts. I turn over to another production of the honorable senator. When I stated the other day that there had been a sort of billing and cooing, a sort of caressing, a sort of old-fashioned courtship, between certain gentlemen here and the ultra-abolition party, the senator and his friends came forward and very indignantly denied it. Denials have come upon us thick and fast from that day to this, not only through the senators, but through their newspaper journals all over the country. I have had a perfect shower of newspapers rained on me from every part of the country, all indignantly denying that I was at all right in assuming that there was any sort of attempt to get up a political marriage between the abolitionists of the Garrison and Wendell Phillips school and the Black Republican party. I ask the senator from Massachusetts whether he did not, on the 20th of June, 1855, address this letter to Wendell Phillips ? I need not say to the Senate who Wendell Phillips is. It is sufficient to say that he "out-Herods Herod," he "out-Garrisons Garrison," he "out-Parkers Par-

ker." He goes further than the renowned Beecher himself. This I understand to be the letter of the Senator :

"I hope, my dear sir, that we shall all strive to *unite and combine all the friends of freedom*; that we shall forget *each other's faults and shortcomings* in the past ; and all labor to secure that co-operation by which alone *THE SLAVE IS TO BE EMANCIPATED, and the domination of his master broken*. Let us remember that more than *three millions of bondmen*, groaning under nameless woes, demand that we shall cease to reproach each other, and that we labor for their *DELIVERANCE*."

Did the senator write that letter?

Mr. WILSON. Will the senator allow me a word on that subject? He has put a categorical question. I am ready to answer the question ; but I would like to put my own construction on that letter.

Mr. BROWN. Any construction the senator pleases. I cannot say that I will adopt his construction, but I will hear it.

Mr. WILSON. Well, Mr. President, I received an invitation from Wendell Phillips to attend a meeting, and to address that meeting. I wrote that letter.

Mr. BROWN. So I thought.

Mr. WILSON. I agree to every word of it now, as I did then ; and there is nothing in that letter inconsistent with anything I have uttered upon this floor. I am opposed to slavery. I am in favor of its abolition everywhere where I have the power. Mr. Phillips, as the senator says, takes extreme views. I differ from him altogether in regard to them. He is a gentleman of great talent and character—in my opinion the greatest living orator on this continent. I have heard no man in the country during the last twenty years—and I have heard the foremost orators of the country—that I consider his equal.

My idea is this : I want all men who are opposed to slavery to take a moderate and reasonable position, to abandon the extreme notions which those men entertain, to oppose the extension of slavery, separate the federal government from its connexion with it, banish the negro discussions that we are having in these halls, and leave slavery in the slave States, where the Constitution leaves it, to the care of the people of those several States. I believe that when that is done, the liberal, high-minded, just men of the south will, in their own time and in their own way, bring about a safe emancipation. That is my view of the matter. It was so then, and is so now.

Mr. BROWN. Well, Mr. President, the senator admits that he wrote the letter. My charge was, that there was an attempt, on the part of these Republican senators, to get up a political marriage with the abolitionists, and the denial was to that charge. The senator from Massachusetts denied the charge, and was at great pains, in his speech the other day, to complain that I had made certain remarks in reference to Garrison and his friends, and had coupled them with the senator and his friends ; in all of which he intended to discard the idea that there was any kind of affiliation or political association between the Republican senators here and these ultra abolitionists out of doors ; and yet, when I introduce a letter which comes precisely to the point, showing that the senator himself had addressed one of the extremest of these men, saying : "You and I ought to act together ; you and I must act together ; three millions of bondmen groan, and you and I must come to their deliverance;" when I show that the

senator addressed this appeal to the most ultra of the abolitionists, the senator comes forward to palliate. But, sir, what becomes of his denial that he ever courted the support or co-operation of these people—

Mr. WILSON. Will the senator allow me a word?

Mr. BROWN. Yes, sir; certainly.

Mr. WILSON. I made the denial; I make it now. The Garrison abolitionists do not vote. I believe them to be sincerely opposed to slavery, but they do not vote. They have taken positions which, in my judgment, are wrong. What I wished was this: to have the men who act with them abandon their extreme notions, and take a moderate position, and stand where we stand—upon a purely constitutional and national basis.

Mr. BROWN. Then, sir, why did the senator say to Mr. Phillips, "Let us all labor together to secure the co-operation by which alone the slave is to be emancipated, and the domination of his master broken?"

Mr. WILSON. I explained that.

Mr. BROWN. Is not that the precise point to which Phillips is fighting—to emancipate the slave and break the domination of his master? Where? In the States. Is there slavery anywhere else but in the States? When you emancipate the slave, you must emancipate the slave in the States; and when you break the domination of the master, there is no domination to be broken anywhere but in the States. Then, when the senator said to Phillips, "Let us all labor together to this end," was he not inviting Phillips on to his own platform, or was he saying to Phillips, "My dear Phillips, let me go on to your platform." [Laughter.]

Mr. WILSON. Mr. President, I think the senator is entirely mistaken, and is pushing that point further than it can be legitimately carried. My idea is, and was then, that the way to break the domination of the master over the government of the country and over the slave is, so far as we are a nation, to prevent the extension or existence of slavery outside of the slave States, and then to leave the matter with them to settle, because it is the only constitutional way, and the only way in which I believe it can ever be done peaceably. In my judgment, this federal government cannot interfere for the abolition of slavery in the States without endangering the safety of the country, and bringing about a state of affairs that will be detrimental to the interests of both master and slave.

Mr. BROWN. If that was the idea of the senator from Massachusetts when he wrote the letter, he is certainly the most unfortunate man that ever took up a pen to express an idea. While I certainly shall not undertake to say that the senator's interpretation of his own language is not the true interpretation, I do undertake to say, and appeal to the intelligence of the Senate and the world, whether any other man would put that interpretation on it. When the senator declared: "Three millions of bondmen, groaning under nameless woes, demand that we shall cease to reproach one another, and that we labor for their deliverance," he used language which would teach every man who read it to believe that he was ready for any scheme

which looked to the emancipation of the slaves in the States. There are no three millions of slaves anywhere else groaning under nameless woes, nor enjoying the highest degree of human felicity, or any intermediate state of misery or happiness between the two; the only slaves on this continent to which the Senator could have alluded, were the three millions of slaves in the States; and when he said to Wendell Phillips: "You and I, your friends and my friends, must labor unceasingly for the deliverance of those three millions of bondmen," he must have meant—at least, the human mind will conclude, in the absence of his own denial, that he meant—the slaves in the States. He says he did not so mean, and I am bound to believe him; but I am sorry to trust his candor at the expense of his understanding.

Mr. WILSON. Without interrupting the speaker too much, I wish to say that Mr. Phillips and Mr. Phillips's friends did not so understand it. They know my precise and exact position. The letter was probably hastily and carelessly written to a friend; but the construction the Senator puts on it, no man in Massachusetts ever put on it.

Mr. BROWN. I expect the Senator has been explaining it there as he has here. [Laughter:]

Mr. WILSON. The question was never raised there at all.

Mr. BROWN. When he wrote the letter to Wendell Phillips, the Abolitionists no doubt expected the co-operation of the Senator and his friends; but when he became startled at his own position, and commenced, as he is doing now, to fall back on what he considered to be a more impregnable position, I dare say Wendell Phillips said, "Well, my dear Wilson, you have not spoken as candidly as I thought you did." If, however, the language had been left without explanation in speeches here or elsewhere, I venture to say Mr. Wendell Phillips, and all other men, would have put the same construction on it that I do.

Mr. President, I have already noticed the speeches of the two Senators at greater length than I had intended. The material before me is not half exhausted; but if I go on I shall be compelled to overlook some of their associates—I have a word for each of them. The Senator from New York I regard as the very Ajax Telamon of his party; and the Senator from Massachusetts may, I think, be fairly considered their Jupiter Tonans. I had, therefore, to devote some time to them; but I beg the others not to consider themselves slighted; I will come to them after a while.

I must, before leaving the Senator from Massachusetts, even at the risk of being tedious, say a word in reply to the speech pronounced by him the other day. Almost in the outset of his speech he pronounced in measured, studied phrase, "those twin sisters of barbarism, slavery, and polygamy."

Mr. WILSON. That was a quotation.

Mr. BROWN. Well, sir, quotation or original thought, for what purpose was it introduced into the Senator's speech? If he means, as he says he does, to accomplish his ends by moral suasion, by finally raising up a party in the south to co-operate with him in the great work of overturning slavery, let me ask, are men persuaded by

this sort of denunciation? Is the southern slaveholder to be persuaded by being told that he is the *confreere* of the citizens of Utah—that the man in Mississippi who owns his fifty slaves is as morally corrupt as he of Utah who has his fifty wives? If the Senator meant anything, he meant precisely that. If the Senator expects to make converts by that species of preaching, he will have to preach to some other people than those whom I represent. Let me say now to the Senator and all who sympathise with him, that I love this Union; those whom I have the honor here to represent, and in whose name I speak to-day, love it; but if we are to live together in peace, this sort of denunciation must cease. This species of reviling, these taunts, these insults levelled at every slaveholding family in fifteen States of the Union, must come to an end, or we cannot live together in peace and quietude. I say no more.

The senator denies all association with Garrison, and politicians of that school; but when I allude to what Garrison said, the senator is quick to spring to his feet for the purpose of putting in a vindication. I am always quick, I hope to vindicate my friends, but very slow to vindicate my enemies. If they have no sympathizing friends here, they can send their vindication through some other channel than myself. But in the very act of vindicating his friend, Garrison, from the charges which I made, the senator admitted all that I said. My declaration was, that Garrison had declared, in the last canvass, that if he had a million of votes to dispose of, he would give them all to Frémont—of course I meant to say in the contest then going on; in the contest as between Buchanan, Fillmore, and Frémont. I did not say that he preferred Frémont to all other men; but that, as against the other two, he would give his million of votes for Frémont. My object was to show the bond of sympathy existing between the Republican senators here, and the Garrison, Fred. Douglas, and Wendell Phillips school elsewhere. I think I made my point clear at the time; but, if I failed to do so then, I trust the senator appreciates it now. It was, and is, that such was Garrison's partiality, such the partiality of his extreme Abolition crew, that if they had millions of votes to give, they would, in that contest, give them all to the Republican candidate. Garrison would give a million of votes to Frémont, and, in return, Frémont would no doubt give a million of votes to Garrison; and the senator, I suspect, would give his million to either of the two, or to Gerrit Smith, or to his friend, Wendell Phillips; and I half suspect if Fred. Douglas was on the ticket it would make no serious difference with him. [Laughter.]

I made the charge the other day, and to it there has been no denial from the other side of the chamber, that in the very height of the conflict for the presidency, Fred. Douglas, the free negro editor and orator, took down the name of Gerrit Smith and put up the name of John Charles Frémont. Why not that denied? My point, as all must have seen, was to show the tie that binds the Republicans on this floor to the extreme Abolition party out of doors. I wanted to show how they were being knit together—how, being drawn into close companionship, they will, by and by, constitute but one party—and then if the extreme Abolition element prevails, as it most likely

will, the party must become, *par excellence*, the Abolition party. I believe that thousands of good men, now in the Republican ranks, will abandon them if they come to understand the designs of the leaders. I meant to expose these designs—to show that there was a plan on foot to Garrisonize the whole party; and if I have done anything towards accomplishing this end I am satisfied.

There are other points in the senator's speech, to which I will reply briefly. He and others have denied that there was anything of sectionalism in the late contest; and their denial is based, if I understand them correctly, on the ground that the mere fact of their candidates for President and Vice President being from the same section of the Union, did not establish sectionalism in the ticket. The senator cited the fact that Mr. Calhoun was upon the same ticket with General Jackson, and yet, he said, there was no charge of sectionalism then. Let me say to the senator, none but the feeblest mind could ever have pretended that the mere fact of both candidates being from the same section afforded evidence of sectionalism. I can select a ticket from Vermont and Massachusetts to-day—and surely it would be as hard to get it there as anywhere else—which would be purely national; and so I could select one from the South which would be purely sectional as against the South. Why, sir, suppose Cassius M. Clay, of Kentucky, were nominated for the Presidency, and Francis P. Blair, of Maryland, for the Vice Presidency: does any one doubt that such a ticket would be a sectional ticket? It would be a ticket hostile to the South, although both the nominees reside in slaveholding States? Surely I need not say to the senator that it is the sentiment of the party, and of its candidates, that constitute its sectionality, and not the residence of one or both its nominees.

Are your sentiments national? Were not the sentiments which you avowed in the late canvass confined exclusively to the favor of one section? Were they not uniformly hostility to the other? Does not the country so recognize them? The senator himself, in the progress of his speech, and while uttering his complaint that we of the South did not tolerate speakers who entertain his opinion, gave us the best evidence of the sectionalism of his party. "Why," said he, "did we not have advocates in the South?" "Because," he answered, "you would not let the friends of our ticket speak there." Why did we not let them speak? Was it because they were national in their sentiments? Was it because they came to advocate sentiments equally acceptable to the North and to the South, equally favorable to the one section as to the other? No, sir, the senator knows this was not the reason. The senator knew perfectly well that the reason why orators of his party were not allowed to speak in the South was simply this: that they came to speak against our institutions, against our domestic peace, against our domestic quietude, against our domestic safety—at least against what we believe to be our domestic peace, safety, and quietude; and of this we simply claimed to be the best judges. The charge that we have stifled debate or attacked the freedom of speech is not true, and those who make it know it is not true.

But, sir, the object of the Senator in introducing this point was to

complain of the want of liberality in the South. "Why," said he, "your southern people will not permit northern men to go there and express their honest sentiments. When they do go, you get up mobs and drive them out." Let me say to the Senator, that when he or his friends come to the South to utter national sentiments, they will be heard with attention and listened to with deference. But when they come to preach such sentiments as a Senator on this floor has been heard to utter within the last week, they may deem it fortunate if they escape the fury of an outraged people. When any man, whether he be a Senator or a private citizen, comes to tell our slaves "that they have a right to murder their masters, and that he will not advise them not to do it," we consider it no breach of hospitality, no violation of the freedom of speech, to say that such sentiments shall not be expressed in our midst. If the Senator shall ever come to Mississippi and say there what I understand he has said recently in this city, he will be ejected, if, indeed no severer punishment shall be inflicted on him.

Mr. WILSON. Do I understand the Senator from Mississippi to state that I have said in this city any thing of that kind—that I would advise the slaves to cut their master's throats, or in any way whatever commit any violence?

Mr. BROWN. I undertake to say, not what the Senator has said, but what I understand he has said, from gentlemen who come to me avouched as men of character, namely: that he did say, in a public hotel in this city, in the last five days, that the slaves had a right to kill their masters, and that he would not advise them not to cut their masters' throats.

Mr. WILSON. Mr. President, I desire to say here now, that in this city, or out of this city, I never harbored a thought of that character, and never gave it utterance—never at any time, or upon any occasion. If I could speak to the slaves of the South I would utter no voice of that character; I would advise no violence whatever. I do not believe in it; I would not advise it; on the contrary, I believe that any insurrections, any acts of violence on their part, can only end in one way, and that is in their own injury.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I certainly shall make no question as to the veracity of the Senator. I have repeated what I have heard. I have repeated what I have in writing from a man whom gentlemen of the very highest character assure me is a man of respectability and honor. He told me that he heard the Senator say so; and he asserts, likewise, that there were other witnesses present, whose names he gave me. If the Senator denies the charge, of course his denial ends the controversy. I am not to stand up in the face of the Senate and on any proof insist that a Senator has spoken falsely. It is not my duty to do so. I will have no question of that sort with the Senator from Massachusetts or any one else; but if he desires to know upon what authority I made the statement, I am prepared here, or upon a private call, to produce the evidence.

Much has been said, Mr. President, of an irritating character, on both sides of this slavery question. I do not know that the breach between the North and the South can ever be healed. But it is very

certain that those who desire peace should throw their oil on the water and not into the fire. While, therefore, I shall, as always heretofore, refuse to make unmanly concessions, I will abstain from saying any thing that is irritating or unnecessarily severe. I am not ashamed to say that I want peace.

Senators on the other side of the chamber, and their sympathizing friends all over the country, deplore the condition of the black man in the South. I shall not pause now to contrast his condition there with what it is in his native country. If the Christian religion be a reality—and in its sublime truths I am a firm believer—I am at a loss to understand how any man can pretend that the barbarian and cannibal, standing on the shores of Africa, and blessed with freedom, is better off than the civilized and evangelized slave on a southern plantation, cursed with bondage. Allowing all you say of the horrors of slavery to be true, they are more than compensated by the moral and religious elevation of the African in this country. But what you say is not true, and all the world knows it is not. One thing I may mention that is true beyond all controversy, and that is, that those most familiar with slavery see the least of its horrors. I speak not alone of those who live in the South, and who see it every day in all its forms; but of those in the free States most contiguous to it. The people in southern Illinois and the eastern part of Indiana live almost in sight of slavery, and mingle with it almost every day in Kentucky and Missouri. The people in these localities, more than any others in the free States, trade to the South; they visit the plantations, and mingle freely with the slaves and with their masters. The result is that they discard the sickly sentimentality so freely indulged in by those who know nothing of slavery except as they see it in Abolition newspapers and Black Republican speeches. Fourteen counties in southern Illinois gave Buchanan fourteen thousand votes, and Frémont less than four hundred. I suppose the mob did not drive the Republican orators out of that country, as they did from the southern States; or if they did, I hope it is not to be charged to the account of the slaveocracy. The simple truth is, Mr. President, there is not one man in a thousand, who knows any thing of slavery practically, that does not believe it to be the normal condition of the negro race. Seen through the interstices of Uncle Tom's Cabin, Garrison's Liberator, or one of the Senator's speeches, it is, I grant you, a frightful outrage on humanity.

The senator alluded, the other day, to certain speeches made by leading statesmen in Virginia, which he assured us were more or less favorable to his side of this question. Does the senator know why such speeches are not made now? Does he know why the ameliorating process in the condition of the slave, then going on, has ceased? Does he know why there are thousands of slaves in bondage to-day who might otherwise have been free? Does he know why the slaves are not educated? why their liberty is restricted, and their bondage made to sit more heavily upon them? If he does not, I will tell him. It is because of the impertinent intermeddling of himself and his friends with matters that did not concern them.

The senator told us, the other day, on what terms we could get his sympathy. Let me tell him on what terms he can get our respect and

the gratitude of the slave. He can get both by simply minding his own business. His present policy is annoying to us and detrimental to the slave. I use those words in their proper sense. He may annoy and vex the master ; but if he lets slavery alone in the States, as he says he will, he will do him no harm. He may damage the slave by vexing the master ; but if he leaves the slave in bondage, he will do him no good. If you do not mean to overthrow slavery in the States, quit talking about it, quit exciting the fears of the master without a cause, and quit arousing the hopes of the slave without a purpose. That is my advice, and I charge nothing for it.

There is one point of attack against slavery which seems to be a favorite with all its assailants in the Senate, and out of it—and that is, its enervating and destroying effect on the people and States where it exists. The Senator from Massachusetts went out of his way, the other day, to tell us that slavery had converted Mount Vernon into a jungle. While these charges are made and dwelt on with peculiar unction by the Senator from Massachusetts, it is curious to read and ponder the speeches of the Senator from New York, appealing to twenty-five millions of freemen to rise in their majesty and put down the three hundred and fifty thousand slaveholding aristocrats, who are ruling the country, sapping the foundations of liberty, and establishing an aristocracy in our midst. If slavery blights as with a mildew everything that it touches ; if it converts cultivated fields into wild jungles, and stately mansions into bat-roosts ; if it renders the people imbecile in morals and mentally impotent ; is it not a little strange that three hundred and fifty thousand slaveholders should so have got the start of all the world, that twenty-five millions of freemen are called into action to curb their growing power ? The truth is felt, Mr. President, though it is not acknowledged, that slavery has an elevating and ennobling effect on the white man. It is not true that the intellectual giants of the South, who have guided the destiny of the nation through so many years, are but the feeble progeny of an imbecile race, rendered morally oblique and intellectually impotent by the existence of slavery in the southern States. It is not true that three hundred and fifty thousand slaveholders, living in jungles, with no activity of mind, and no energy of body, have so excited the fears of the senator from New York. When we compare our Washingtons, Jeffersons, Madisons, Henrys, Marshalls, Jacksons, and Calhouns, with your greatest and best men, no one can say, with truth, that we have cause to blush.

But you tell us that your people are more progressive than ours. In the mechanic arts I grant that they are. Your work-shops are more numerous, and on a larger scale than ours. The work-shop is the home of vast numbers of your people. In its arts they excel, and we rejoice at their success. We rejoice, because it is for our mutual advantage that they succeed. We rejoice still more, because their success is a part of the common inheritance of the whole people. On the other hand, our home is in the cotton, sugar, rice, and tobacco fields of the South. In our department who will deny that we have succeeded as well as you ? Nowhere on the habitable globe has the culture of cotton been brought to such perfection as in the southern

States of this Union. If gentlemen would only reflect that a proper division of labor, and the highest degree of success in every department, is the best evidence of national prosperity, these ill-natured flings at the South would cease at once.

I have no time to pursue this train of thought, though it might be done with profit both to the North and to the South. Whatever the northern people may say of us, we shall never cease to rejoice in their prosperity.

I must pass on, Mr. President, because I find that my voice is failing me, and even my physical strength is giving way. The senator from Maine [Mr. FESSENDEN] the other day told us that the South was constantly making demands; that the South demanded that such and such things should be done by Congress; and upon the failure of compliance we threatened a dissolution of the Union. If the senator has so understood us, allow me to say to him that he has understood us amiss. In making that declaration he did us grievous wrong. The South has demanded nothing. She never came to your doors with a petition for favor at your hands. She never asked affirmative legislation from this government, on the subject of slavery, since it has had an existence, save in the pursuit of a clear and admitted constitutional right. Her position has been one of opposition to your action. Not being a petitioner, she has uniformly come here to remonstrate against your action. Her whole demand, her whole policy, might at any moment have been summed up, and it is now, in these three short words: "Let us alone." As some evidence that I am right on that question, I beg to read for the information of the senator from Maine the positions taken by my own State, not through her legislature, not through any informal convention, not through any primary mass meeting called by a newspaper, but through a convention of her people lawfully called to express her sovereign will in reference to this whole matter in controversy. So far as she is concerned, she demands nothing; and I believe I can appeal with perfect confidence to senators from all the southern States to bear me witness that her position is substantially the position of their States. First, she says there shall be no interference by congressional legislation with the institution of slavery in the States. She certainly asks nothing in that but your forbearance. She then says, second, the slave trade between the States shall not be interfered with by action of Congress. Then she says, third, there shall be no action of Congress on the subject of slavery in the District of Columbia, or any place subject to the jurisdiction of Congress, incompatible with the safety and domestic tranquility, or the rights and honor of the slaveholding States. Then she says, fourth, that the refusal of Congress to admit a new State, on the ground of her tolerating slavery within her limits, would be subject for complaint; and declares, fifth, that Congress shall pass no law prohibiting slavery in any of the Territories; and, sixth, that the repeal of the fugitive slave law, or the neglect or refusal of the General Government to enforce the constitutional provision for the recovery of fugitive slaves, would be ground of complaint.

These are six positions taken in convention, and neither one of them looks to affirmative action on the part of the Government;

neither of them demands anything but your forbearance; neither of them demands anything except what may be summed up in three words—let us alone. Beyond that I undertake to say there is not now, has not been, and, in my opinion, never will be, any considerable number of southern people demanding anything. Let us alone; leave us where we were left by the Constitution of the United States; cease to interfere with us; cease to make war upon us and our institutions, and our domestic safety, and we shall move on harmoniously together as our fathers did before us.

I feel, Mr. President, that I ought to say a word in reference to our position as regards the Territories. There seems to me to have been a most persevering attempt commenced, and pertinaciously kept up, throughout all the northern States, to misrepresent the position of the southern States and people on this point. What have we asked? What do we ask now? Simply to be treated as equals—to be allowed our equal rights and our equal position in the Territories. The soil, all must admit, is the common property of all the people or of all the States. We have asked that Congress shall so treat it, and make no insulting discrimination between the people of Mississippi and the people of Massachusetts—between the people of New York and the people of Virginia; but that all alike shall be allowed to go to the Territories, and take with them whatever is recognized as property by the laws of the State from which they go. We have insisted, and do yet insist, that whoever makes laws for the Territories is as much bound to give protection to us and our property, as to give protection to the northern man and his property. No right exists to discriminate against us, and we ask no discrimination in our favor. I appeal to the plain common sense of every man, if in this there has been anything unreasonable. In the name of all that is just, has not the citizen of Virginia the same right to go to Kansas or any other Territory, and take with him that which is recognized as property by the laws of Virginia, as a New Yorker has to go and take with him that which is recognized as property by the laws of New York? Have citizens of Massachusetts, let me ask, any higher privileges in the Territory than citizens of Mississippi? And if so, where did they obtain them? How did they derive them? By what authority do they undertake to claim for themselves exclusive privileges in the Territories? If gentlemen are prepared to meet us on this ground of equality, the whole matter in controversy, as regards the Territories, is settled at once. If any Mississippian shall attempt to set up authority through Congress, the Territories, the people, or the States, to exclude citizens of Massachusetts, Maine, New York, New Hampshire, or of any other State, from the common Territory, he will find himself opposed by the whole mass of southern people. We have always said, as I say to-day, that the citizens of the New England States, the citizens of all the free States, have the same right to go to the Territories and take with them that which is recognized as property by the laws of their States, as we claim for ourselves, to go and take that which is recognized as property by the laws of the States from which we go. Then as to the protection of property after it gets there—whoever makes laws for the protection of the property of

citizens of Maine, New York, New Hampshire, or Massachusetts, is, in my judgment--and I stand on that claim--equally bound to make laws for the protection of the property of Mississippians, Virginians, and Tennesseans. If you ask no protection for your property through congressional legislation or through territorial legislation, we shall ask none for ours. If you ask protection for your property, we say we are equally entitled to protection for ours. We say that neither Congress nor the Territorial legislature shall, with our consent, make any insulting discrimination between the people and property of one section of the Union, and the people and property of any other section--between the property of a citizen of New Hampshire or Massachusetts, and the property of a citizen of Maryland or Mississippi. Can we maintain ourselves on the soundness of this position? And if not, why?

Do gentlemen claim that we are under the ban of the Constitution? Do gentlemen pretend that the Constitution which gives us our authority to be here, which authorizes me to address this august body to-day, which brings us into this council house, discriminates against the property of the fifteen southern States of this Union? Do they pretend that there is anything in that Constitution which denies to our property equal protection in the Territories with the property of the other sixteen States of the Union? I undertake to say that it is the only article of property which is clearly and distinctly recognized by the Constitution. Take anything else, merchandise, live-stock, anything you please, and you can find nothing in the Constitution which specially and specifically looks to its recognition as property. The Constitution does recognize persons held to service (slaves) as property, and it recognizes nothing else by name. Every other kind of property is left to the protection of local or State legislation. Not a word is found in the Constitution about merchandise, live-stock, or money as property. Persons bound to service (slaves) alone are mentioned. Then with what pretence of justice is it said, that this property is under the ban of the Constitution, or that it is not equally entitled to protection with any other kind of property?

The southern States, Mr. President, have been accused of violence in the maintenance of their rights under the Constitution, as they understand them. Our people are set down as lawless, and are constantly charged with attempts to carry their points by force. A stranger would be very apt to conclude from the accounts given of us, that every southern man was a walking citadel. I shall make no defense against charges like this--our States and our people stand on the defensive. Never, sir, never since the government was founded, has the North had reason to complain that either the southern States or the southern people have interfered with their domestic concerns. I have no reproaches to utter; but can our northern friends say as much? Can they say that they have never interfered with our domestic affairs?

When the Kansas bill was passed, we hoped there would be an end of this controversy. It was intended to take the question of slavery out of Congress, and transfer it to the people of the Territory where it properly belonged, and who, as we all agreed, had the right *at the*

proper time to settle it for themselves. What the proper time may be was a subject left open for discussion; and to this point I will recur presently.

It certainly was not contemplated by any of us that violence was to be used by any party to coerce a decision in Kansas. The people there, those who were *bona fide* citizens of the Territory, were to be left perfectly free to settle their domestic affairs in their own way, subject to but one influence, and that the benign and peaceful influence of the Constitution. No sooner had this bill passed than a concerted and powerful effort was set on foot here, and rapidly taken up in the New England States, to colonize the Territory with a vagrant population. Men were enlisted and sent there, not to cultivate the soil, not to erect work-shops and carry on the mechanic arts—no, not for these purposes. They went not with the artizan's tools or the implements of husbandry in their hands, but with rifles, bowie knives, and other deadly weapons. Their object could not be mistaken. Instead of colonizing the country, and making for themselves beneficent and wholesome laws—laws under which they meant themselves to live—people went to Kansas for no higher purpose than to fan the flames of discord, and to make laws from which they meant themselves to flee. They went for mischief, and they got it; they sowed the whirlwind, and reaped the storm. They were sent to Kansas to make Kansas a free State *nolens volens*, and the Missourians were inflamed to madness by their conduct. It was not, sir, that these men went, or the States from which they went, that stirred the blood of Missourians, but it was the purpose for which they went. When the Kansas bill passed, very few of us expected Kansas to become a slave State, and very few of us cared much whether it did or not. But when we saw an attempt made by the enemies of slavery to plant on the borders of a slave State a free-soil colony, with no higher purpose than to harass that State—when we saw an attempt made by strangers to enslave the *bona fide* white settlers in Kansas, by forcing on them, not a Kansas but a New England government, our people rose *en masse*, and swore, by the God that made them, these things should not be.

The senator from New Hampshire [Mr. HALE] the other day paraded before the Senate a handbill—and he did it with a flourish of trumpets that would have done honor to the fat knight when he claimed the credit of killing Hotspur. The handbill spoke of Buchanan and Breckinridge, and *Free Kansas*. The senator evidently thought he had made a grand discovery. I certainly do not mean to approve of that handbill. It probably suggested an erroneous idea to many who saw it. It may have suggested that the Democratic party was for Kansas free, as the senator from New Hampshire understood the word “free;” and if it did, it suggested a falsehood. The Democratic party as a party is neither for free Kansas nor slave Kansas, as the free-soilers understand the words “free” and “slave.” The Democratic party is for leaving Kansas perfectly *free*, at the *right time*, to settle the slavery question for herself, restrained only, as we all are in our action, by the provisions of the Federal Constitution. In this sense the Democrats are for FREE Kansas. The senator's idea, if I understand him, is to make Kansas free by releasing the black man from the au-

thority of his master, and then force a government on the white people in the Territory through the agency of New England emigrant aid societies. His free Kansas makes the negro free by enslaving the white man; but my free Kansas makes the white man free, and leaves the negro where the Constitution left him—subject to the authority of his master.

I was somewhat surprised, Mr. President, the other day, to hear the senator from Illinois, [Mr. TRUMBULL,] in catechising the senator from Pennsylvania, [Mr. BIGLER,] who was then addressing the Senate, raise the question as to how far we on the Democratic side of the house concurred in opinion upon the mooted point of squatter sovereignty. I suppose the object of the senator in introducing that point was to make mischief—to stir up strife between senators on this side of the chamber. If that was his purpose, let me say to him that he fell, as he will continue to fall, very far short of his mark. That there may be shades of difference in our opinions is very likely; that I do not, on every point, concur with my distinguished and venerable friend from Michigan is probable; but that there is any difference between us which can by possibility prevent our acting in harmony for the accomplishment of certain great purposes which the national Democracy have in view, I utterly deny. I should prefer to have my friend agree with me, as he may prefer to have me agree with him; but our difference is not such, a I shall presently show, that we may not, without sacrifice on either side, act together on practical issues.

But, sir, how comes it that the senator from Illinois, how comes it that other senators on his side have all of a sudden found something so monstrous in this doctrine of squatter sovereignty? When had we the first evidence exhibited to us of the power of squatter sovereignty on this continent? Excuse me, sir, but I undertake to say, that the first exhibition of it was in the State which you have the honor solely at this moment to represent on the floor of the Senate, [Mr. WELLER in the chair.] When the people of California assembled in convention, and undertook to frame a State constitution for themselves, they were all squatters; they were in the country without authority of law: there was no law authorizing them to be there. When they assembled in convention on the high mission of making a State constitution, they assembled there to perform an act of sovereignty; when they made the constitution and set up a State government in all its forms, it was an act of sovereignty performed by squatters and by nobody else.

Now, sir, I ask senators on the other side of the chamber, whether they did not sanction that proceeding? I pray you, gentlemen, were you not, one and all, in favor of admitting California under her squatter-sovereignty constitution? Was not the senator from Illinois the advocate for the admission of California under the constitution thus formed? Was not the Senator from New York, and he from Massachusetts, and he from Ohio, all around the chamber, wherever they are, were they not friends of the admission of California under her squatter-sovereignty constitution? Then what right have they to complain of squatter-sovereignty? And then who was the first representative of squatter-sovereignty on this floor? When California was admitted, there were already at the door of the Senate two gen-

tle men asking for admission. One of them was John Charles Frémont. He came here as a senator, the first who presented himself from California, and he was the very embodiment of squatter-sovereignty. He had no constituency but a squatter-sovereignty constituency. He came from no State but a State brought into being by squatter-sovereigns. These gentlemen, to a man, advocated his admission. They not only went for the admission of the State, but for the admission of her senators. Thus they endorsed the whole proceeding up to that time. I suspect that they, and all their class of politicians, are very much like one I heard speaking lately. He said he was for squatter-sovereignty if it worked out in his favor, and against it if it did not.

In my opinion, squatter-sovereignty is a misnomer, and territorial sovereignty a humbug. I understand, sir, what is meant by State sovereignty, and in my opinion there is no other kind of sovereignty existing in this country. Squatter-sovereignty, territorial sovereignty, and popular sovereignty, (when applied to the Territories,) all belong to the same category, and they are all political absurdities in my opinion. But I am not going to bore the Senate by giving the reasons why I think so.

We agreed to let Kansas and all the other Territories manage their own affairs in their own way, *subject only to the Constitution*. We differed as to what a Territory might rightfully do under the Constitution. My friend from Michigan [Mr. CASS] thought, and still thinks, a territorial legislature, such as that in Kansas, has the right, under the Constitution, to exclude slavery. I think differently. He is not seeking to have his ideas enacted into a law by Congress; nor am I. He admits that if the legislature of Kansas has not the right under the Constitution to exclude slavery, Congress cannot confer it; and I know, if the legislature has the right Congress cannot take it away. Therefore, neither of us propose that Congress shall do anything. We voted together on the Kansas bill, and agreed then to refer all our difference of opinion to the Supreme Court of the United States—the only tribunal on earth competent to decide between us. When that decision is rendered, we both stand solemnly pledged to abide by it. I speak not now of what a sovereign State, in the exercise of her reserved rights, may do—that is a subject for future consideration and decision. Now, sir, the difference between my honorable friend and myself is precisely the difference between Democrats who believe in squatter-sovereignty, and Democrats who do not believe in it.

If an unorganized Territory, such as California was in 1849, such as Kansas was in 1853, such as the Indian Territory outside of Arkansas now is, shall undertake to exclude slavery, the Senator from Michigan and myself agree that it undertakes to do what it has no right to do. But if an organized Territory, like Kansas or Nebraska undertakes, through its legislative council, to exclude slavery, the senator thinks they have the right to do it. I do not think so. This he calls popular sovereignty. I call it the assumption of a right not conferred by the Constitution, and therefore not existing in the Territory. He may be right. I think he is not. But neither of us desires or expects Congress to decide between us.

The senator from Illinois, [Mr. TRUMBULL,] the other day interro-

gated the senator from Pennsylvania, [Mr. BIGLER,] as to what Mr. Buchanan's views were on this point. My friend from Pennsylvania declined to reply, because he had no authority to do so. The friends of Mr. Buchanan were satisfied with his position on this point before they nominated and elected him, and they are not likely to fall out with him now on account of any suggestions coming from his enemies, secret or open. That he will hold the scales of justice in equal balance between the North and the South I have no doubt; and if he does, his friends North and South will adhere to him. They were strong enough to elect him; and if he fulfils their hopes, as I am sure he will, they will show themselves strong enough to carry his administration through in triumph. Mr. Buchanan may laugh his enemies to scorn. He has only to feel the inspiration that moved the hearts of his friends at Cincinnati, and stand firmly on the platform laid down by them, and they will throw over him their arms, and build around him a rampart that will defy the power of the Black Republicans and all their allies.

But, to return to the Territories: We of the Democratic faith all agree that they may, at the proper time, settle the slavery question for themselves. Some think it may be done sooner; but we all agree that when the people of a Territory meet in convention to frame a State constitution, they may, in that constitution, admit or exclude slavery, as they please; and we agree, further, that their decision is final. If Kansas comes here with a constitution made by her *bona fide* people, free from all outside influences, excluding slavery, there is not a Democrat in either House of Congress who will not vote for her admission; and if, on the other hand, she comes with a constitution similarly made tolerating slavery, there is not a Democrat who will not vote for her admission. Break up your emigrant aid societies at the North, and all interference from the South will cease. Then Kansas, being left perfectly free to regulate her domestic affairs in her own way, may assemble her people in convention, frame her constitution to suit herself, admit or exclude slavery as she pleases, and she will be welcomed into the Union with open arms by every friend of free institutions from the Aristook to the Rio Grande, and from the Atlantic to the far-off Pacific. Sir, the Democracy has stood for fifty years, like our own ocean-bound Republic. The waves of faction have beaten upon it, and they have broken, in harmless ripples, at its feet. It stands to-day a fit type of our glorious country—the hope of the oppressed in every land, and a beacon-light to the sons of freedom throughout the world. It will uphold the Constitution. It will preserve the Union. It will disappoint the tyrants of the Old World, and the enemies of liberty in the New. Democracy will go on conquering and to conquer, until all parties shall confess its dominion, and the whole world be converted to the sublime truths which it teaches. This is its mission.

We mean, Mr. President, to settle this slavery question on a firm and lasting, because on a just, liberal, and constitutional basis. We mean to stop agitation; we mean to give repose to the South, and quiet to the whole country; we mean to rout the Abolitionists and bury Black Republicanism so low that the sound of Gabriel's trumpet will not reach it on the day of judgment! This is our hope; this our

prayer ; this our confident expectation ; but if we shall be deceived in this—if it shall please God to prosper our enemies—if there shall be no settlement—if agitation is kept up—if the South can have no peace—if our enemies have the power, and are resolved to use it in breaking up the Union, and trampling the Constitution under foot—then we will turn to the senator from New York, the great chieftain of his party, and the author of all our woes, and we will say to him and his infatuated allies, as Abram said to Lot : “ Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdsmen and thy herdsmen, for we are brethren. Is not the whole land before thee ? Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me : if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right ; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.” If this appeal shall fail to reach the heart of the senator and his allies, there will be but one alternative left us, and that an appeal to the god of battles. May Heaven, in its mercy, avert such a calamity !





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